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The village is a group of houses, each with its own compound, and these give it an inclosed look. There are few if any gardens or vegetable patches either in the compounds or within the village settlement.

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The lanes resemble quiet winding country roads. The rock fences, or the lines of trees or shrubbery often conceal the houses. There is an appearance of loneliness in these lanes and roads, except at busy times of the day when the children return from school. The lack of commercial activity, except for the women carrying rice on their heads to the mill and for the small village stores, contributes to this impression of quiet, which one would expect from the routine of agriculture. At night, when the doors are drawn, and when the flickering and smoky oil lamps are lit, the loneliness and quiet of the village is even more pronounced. The lanes and the roads are deserted, save for an occasional passing truck, bicycle, or three wheeled cycle, and in one of the favorite words of all Okinawans, the place is sabishii.⁶

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Since there is little activity in the village other than farming, neighboring villages and distant towns supply the additional needs. At nearby Gushichan village, there are the primary and junior high schools, the post office, the township and agricultural association offices, a barbershop, and some small stores. At Minatogawa, about one and one half miles away, there is a public bath, and across the river from this village, in Horikawa, an occasional play from the Okinawan stage, or a movie. Buses run through the village twice a day and one can make connections to Naha or Itoman, the two most likely places for buying or selling. Or one can take the three wheeled cycles which pass through more frequently.

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Physically, the village was much affected by the war. On June 11, 1945, the front line ran through the cultivated area between Hanashiro and Gushichan villages. Hill 95, the scene of fierce fighting was in the vicinity of Hanashiro.⁷ One can still see an occasional tank track, abandoned helmets and scattered fragments of war materials in the fields. The village was affected by the war in ways which are now observable indirectly in the makeshift houses, improvised shacks, the roofs of half tile and half thatch, the odd additions to the older buildings partly destroyed, and the lack of drain pipes and water catchment tanks. Houses, which to superficial appearance, have existed for generations, have been rebuilt since the war with grass substituting for the tile roofs. War operations over the cultivated areas also resulted in some loss of land. A long mound in the rice areas, with paths along its ridge, was formerly a road built by the Americans in the final drive toward Mabuni. Almost all the houses in the village were destroyed.

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6 This Japanese word suggests both loneliness and melancholy.

7 Okinawa, the last battle, as cited, 437 (illustration), 434-42 on the struggle for Hill 95.

417 the house from the glances of the curious. It has been suggested that the stationary gate at the entrance of the courtyard is of Chinese origin, that its purpose originally was to scare away spirits, and that its former presence in the tomb compound indicates that it was introduced along with the turtleback or horseshoe tomb from Fukien province in China.²

175 Captain Hall described Okinawan house exteriors and the surrounding buildings, including those of the common people. The house was "buried in foliage" and hidden from view. It was surrounded by a light fence of rods, about one foot apart with creepers on top. These rods were probably stalks of miscanthus grass, or of the dwarf bamboo. The site had a wicker gate, possibly meaning the hinpun made out of the dried grass stalks. One house which he described was divided into two compartments, eight feet square, with a small veranda at one end. The floors, made of bamboo, and about six feet above the ground, were covered with a straw mat. The walls, about five feet high, were wattled with split bamboo, and the house had a pointed thatched roof.

352 In the interior, there were shelves for bowls and cups, and in a
354 loft or garret tools, nets, or baskets were stored. These installations now are often found in the kitchen. In the middle of one side of the house there was a fireplace, sunk below the level of the ground.

343 Outside, in the compound, a pigeon house, poultry yard and spinning wheels were observed. In another passage, Hall describes a cottage of "wattled rattans" with a light open bamboo roof with thatch and creepers, one wing of which was occupied by goats. The compound consisted of a stable, a pig sty, and a poultry house. There was also a mill. The granary was on posts about six feet above the ground with firewood piled below. There was an anvil with a forge of masonry but no bellows.³

The houses of the poor, said Fahn in his report to Commodore Perry, were made of bamboo and had no floors.⁴ Accounts around the turn of the century say that houses and granaries were supported by corner posts of considerable height. Schwartz said these posts were about five feet high. The house walls of straw thatch were held in place by bamboo grass matting with a space two feet in width acting both as a door and a window, a matting curtain covering the aperture.⁵

[Text continues TOP of p. 73--Analyst]

2 Simon, as cited, 80. C. W. Bishop has suggested that the stone houses of the Ainus of Hokkaido point to contact with southern insular peoples. Also, the primitive Japanese hut which was illustrated resembled the one we have been describing for Okinawa. It had a thatched roof and a courtyard which was cut off from the outside view by the hinpun. The historical geography of early Japan. *Geo. Review*, 13 (1923), 40-63. Note especially Figures 5 and 6. (This article was reprinted in *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1925).

3 Captain Basil Hall, *Voyage to Corea and the Great Loo Choo*, as cited, 124, 141, 142-43.

4 Hawks, *Perry's expedition to Japan*, as cited, Vol. II, 50.

5 Henry B. Schwartz, *In Togo's country*. New York and Cincinnati, 1908, 148-49.

These rooms, opening on the front of the house along the corridor, do not run the full length of the house. A fourth, a back room, running across the back part may open on to the kitchen. Sometimes this room is only roughly finished and used for storage or sleeping purposes or both. A grandmother often takes the grandchildren (other than the infant) to bed with her in this room. 342 [535] [513]

The kitchen is set off from the rest of the house by being on a lower level, perhaps one step. The kitchen usually has a hard dirt floor. Occasionally it is cemented. Sometimes it has a chimney, sometimes a hole in the side of the wall, which the curious smoke rejects in favor of a leisurely diffusion throughout the other rooms of the house. The kitchen is not part of the house in the sense that the other rooms are. The shoes are not removed when entering it. The kitchen opens out on to a stone or dirt path. Women frequently still eat in the kitchen because of its convenience and the need of going in and out to get water, or to wash vegetables, or to get food from the shed during the preparation of a meal. [576] [564]

The stove is basically an open hearth with a hole at the top for the cooking pan. There is also a hole directly below this into which the fuel can be placed. More elaborate stoves may have three tiers: one for the cooking, one for putting the fuel in, the lower for the ashes. The most simple, in the very poorest houses, are little more than a circular group of stones laid on the ground built up so that a pan can be placed on top. The most elaborate, made of stone, might run across the width of the kitchen and have several openings. Fuel, such as odd branches, sticks of firewood brought from the northern (Kunigami) region, crushed and dried sugar cane, or miscanthus grass of varying length is put part way into the fire and pushed further in as the ends are burned off. 354 [372]

The all stone house is smaller than the wooden house. It invariably has a tile roof, for those able to afford the stone can also buy the tile. The stone blocks used in house construction are usually about nine feet by one foot on the edge.⁶ The stones used as posts are buried two feet in the ground leaving seven feet for the upright. These blocks, called *ishibashida* when used for house construction, have the same width and breadth; they can be cut to any desired length to even off the sides. The stones are layed like bricks with mortar to form the walls of the house. The all stone house is not common, and is usually seen in the south, where the stone is quarried, in Minatogawa, and in adjacent villages. These houses are more modern, and often bathing facilities are built in. The stone house has the advantage of being cool in summer, warm in winter. 342 [333] [184] [515]

Finally, there are the simple structures, resembling shacks or shanties more than houses. These are, as one would expect, more frequent in the areas of the war's operations. There are three main varieties, though the combinations are numerous: (1) the all grass house, now uncommon. The sides of this wattled house are usually of [362]

⁶ Actually they are 9 x 1 x 1 shaku. A shaku is 0.994 feet.

an interwoven diagonal weave of miscanthus whose hollow stalks at maturity are strong but brittle, resembling in appearance a very small piece of bamboo. (2) The house with a simple thatch roof with walls of various sized rocks or small pebbles cemented together with mud taken from the yard, and (3) a thatch roof house whose frame is built with small rough beam poles, over which a thin cheap pine siding is nailed. The construction of this house will be described in some detail below because, with the exception of the modern pine siding to replace the straw or diagonal weave, it is, according to the Okinawans, the oldest type of native rural house. 342

The house must have heat during the winter. The kitchen hearth is not used for this purpose. The kitchen fires are allowed to die down and are only started at meal times. It would be too expensive or wasteful of gathered fuel to do otherwise. Room heat is provided by a brazier (hibachi in Japanese). This may be a large square box with an inset lined with metal in which ashes and charcoal are placed. Some winter cooking may be done here. The hibachi may also be a large earthenware pot in which coals of charcoal are placed. 354 • [415]

In some old homes, another device suitable both for heating and cooking, can still be seen. This was observed in Matsuda, but not in the southern villages. This is also a sort of hearth (jiru in Japanese). The jiru consists of a hanging bamboo pole one end of which is secured by a rope tied to a lattice in the ceiling. On the other end of the pole, about three feet long, there is an iron hook with another device, like an arm bent at the elbow, allowing the height of the hook above the fire to be adjusted. The handle of the pot is placed on this hook and the pot hangs at any desired distance over a bed of coals and ashes. This hearth is not in the kitchen, but at one corner of the dining room, usually where the two open rooms adjoin. The jiru is rare in the villages at the present time. It is from this device that the former practice of a mother and a new born infant "roasting" themselves takes its name; both the mother and the new born child were exposed, in a closed room, to heat from the jiru or from a brazier, even in the intensest heat of summer. [84] [85]

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Building a Simple House

The following description is based on observations made of the construction of a simple house in Minatogawa. The steps are given in some detail because it was said that this house was being constructed in the manner of the traditional rural Okinawan house. 342

Rough beam poles were used. The traditional method of putting on

7 This will be discussed in Chapter 13 on family life in the section on the rearing of children.

away evil spirits (bakemono).¹ From the pig sty the child is then taken to the kitchen, where a pot of rice has been cooking. Soot from the outside of the pot is taken up with the middle finger of the right hand and a round black spot pressed on the forehead above the bridge of the nose between the eyebrows. The reason for this could not be ascertained.

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Beliefs in the power of a pig sty to ward off evil spirits are still held in Minatogawa and the customs were generally practiced up to the beginning of the war. But these beliefs were related more to celebrations following the birth of the child than to the birth itself. The elements of these beliefs seemed to be that the after-world was close to this world. If a child were not protected, the spirits of the afterworld would steal the child and take him back. The party celebrating the birth lasted a whole week, usually starting each evening about 8 and ending at 8 the following morning. Guests stayed up all night to prevent the child from being stolen, for if anyone went to sleep, the spirit would enter. Spirits followed behind the guest and were especially dangerous after 10 at night. The spirits however were frightened by the pigs; guests arriving during the danger hours went to the pig pen first to scare off the spirit following them, before entering the house. There was no evidence, in the parties I attended, of any present observance of this custom by young parents. The week of all night parties is no longer held.

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These beliefs were found in Minatogawa. Manashiro informants had heard of such customs, but were vague about them. While their seeming absence in Matsuda may be due to incomplete data, there may be another explanation. These beliefs may have been picked up by fishing people from other sources.

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One other birth custom known as jiru belongs to the recent history of the island. Jiru, as explained in Chapter V, is a fire place sunk in the floor of an Okinawan house, often in the corner of the dining room which adjoins a hall or a sleeping room, and near the kitchen. Convalescence was called jiru because mother and child warmed themselves by the device. Today convalescence may be called jiru, though it has nothing to do with the old custom, which in the literature has been referred to as "roasting."

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¹ When I discussed this and the following beliefs relating to pigs with people in Matsuda, they ridiculed them and said there was no truth in it, implying that people in the south did not know what they were talking about. Subsequent rechecking convinced me that this was not so and that the beliefs in Minatogawa represent differences in the rural culture.

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In Matsuda, the jiru used after childbirth was either a small fireplace about three feet square set in the floor or an ordinary brazier (hibachi). The mother and the child were put in a dark sleeping room outfitted with the warmer. Sometimes the entire body of the mother was heated; in other cases, she seems to have placed herself so that the vagina received most of the heat. This was done regardless of season and happened in the hottest summer. The mother and child stayed in this room for 30 days. Attending female relatives went in and out only to keep things clean and to take care of the laundry. This form of jiru is said to have been practiced in Matsuda until 10 or 15 years ago.

In Hanashiro, this custom of warming was substantially the same. Regardless of season, the mother with her child retired to a dark room heated with a stove or a brazier. The mother nursed the child and no one entered or disturbed the two except for necessary attentions. No special portions of the body were heated. According to one Hanashiro woman, this custom existed up to 1940.² In present day practice, the mother rests for about 9 days including the day the child is born. During this period, the two are left alone. Necessary changes of clothing are put out and washed by female relatives. Following the rest period, the mother gets up, female friends and relatives clean the place thoroughly, and the house is back to normal.

In Minatogawa, warming is said to have disappeared about 20 years ago. The present period of convalescence lasts also about 9 days, with visits by grandparents on the day of birth, friends of the father on the second day, and those of the mother on the third.

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These customs seem to have died out because of the introduction, through Japan, of modern medicine and the growth of midwifery. The knowledge of a Japanese trained midwife is based on a study of anatomy and a thorough exposition of child birth and child care. Some lore, such as lucky days, and the reckoning of the tide enter, but her techniques are based on medical practices.³

² An old man, a village official, said warming had disappeared 30 years ago, but in this matter the mother's testimony is probably the more reliable. In either event, both point to the relative recency of the practices.

³ One Japanese midwife uses as her guide two volumes by Kinoshita, Seichu. Sanbagakunigi (Lectures on the Science of Midwifery), 1923. Vol. I deals with normal, Vol. II with difficult deliveries.

Survivals of the Priestess (Noro) System

The origin of the priestess system has been traced to primitive fire or hearth worship. A woman was a priestess to the God of Fire (hi no kami) represented in the hearth stone. A set of three rather long stones sometimes set in a triangle often represented the hearth. (These stones in the place of the guardian gods of the village may have the same meaning. In the poorer kitchens, stones set in this manner for the hearth are common to this day). In every house there was a primitive hearth (kanndo). "Here, before this hearth, the ancestors of the household are worshipped, the Fire coming to summarize the ancestors who have sat before the hearth in past generations."³ Each household of a village, each village, and each township had a hearth attendant. The priestess (noro) of the whole township "represents the original worship of the predominant hearth of that region." The duties of the rural priestesses included worshipping at the ancestral shrines, deciding the lucky days for planting, and officiating at marriage and burial ceremonies.

This priestess system was made an institutionalized state religion by King Shō Shin (1477-1526). Their political power was broken by Shō Jōkun, a prime minister of King Shō Tei (1669-1709). The most logical explanation offered for their fall from political power is the influence of Confucianism with its standards of male dominance and the subordination of women. By the end of the 17th century, its economic and political power were declining, but its influence on individual worship, especially, in rural Okinawa, lasted down to the beginning of the recent war.⁴

The priestess system had a place in inheritance customs of the old land tenure system. "Under the ancient system," said Spencer, "certain valuable farm lands were the possession of the Noro, the remainder of the land being held by the community and reassigned at various periods."⁵ Inheritance within the system insured the handing down of these properties in the female line. This succession could be accomplished in a number of ways. The female child of the brother of a priestess might succeed her. This is believed to be the method of succession in ancient times. In later times, the noro married and succession was traced in the male line. The wife of a son of the priestess,

3 This material is based on the article of R. S. Spencer, Noro or Priestesses of Loo-Choo, as cited. The quotation is on p. 97.

4 Ibid, 98, 108.

5 Ibid, 109. The material following is to be found on p. 110.

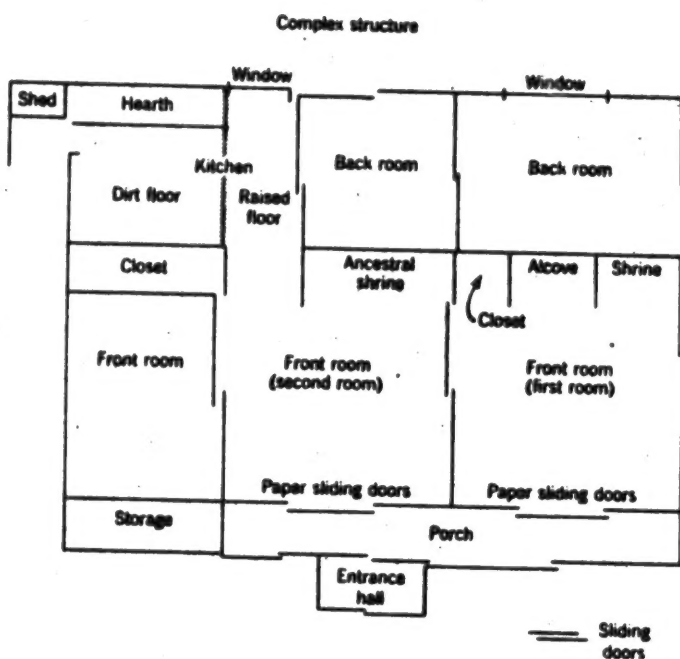
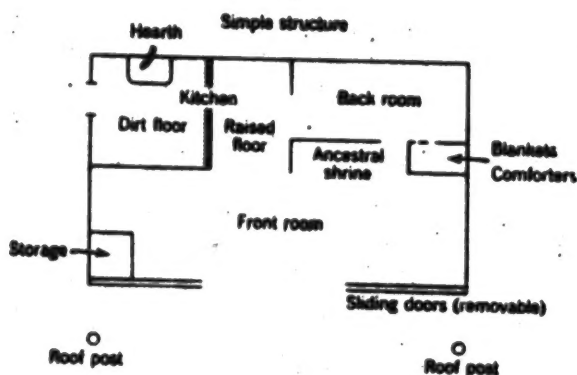


Figure 1. House plan showing simple and complex structures.

Taira: An Okinawan Village 305

There are no uniform sleeping arrangements. The larger the family, 513
the more corners of the front rooms and rear room are occupied. Since
the number of comforters is limited in most families, two or three
members of the family share one. Father and mother do not always
sleep together, and, even if they do, an infant may sleep between them.
When there are several children, another child may sleep next to the
father, so that in one row there may be mother, a baby, father, and an
older child. One or two children usually sleep with the grandmother in
another corner. In several families an older sister may sleep with
younger brothers; in others, two elder brothers, or an older sister and
an older brother, may sleep next to each other. Children do not usually
sleep at other people's houses, but when they reach junior high school
age, a girl may stay with a girl friend or a group of boys may sleep to-
gether at one house.

A simple desk and chair are kept in each house where children go to 352
school. These are put in one corner of the front room, except in large
houses with a third room in front, which is reserved for schoolchildren
of the house, who also sleep there. Around the study corner, books are 353
kept on a crate or shelf. Only the biggest houses have a niche in their
"first" room. Paintings and scrolls, used to decorate alcoves before the
war, have been lost, and few people have acquired replacements. Many
families decorate rooms by pasting pictures from magazines and news-
papers on the walls. Some have reproductions of the Japanese Crown
Prince Akihito, others scenic pictures from Japan.

Only a few recent buildings have inner sliding doors with paper 342
screens. The paper is often left off during the hot season and put on 356
before New Year. If children or cats are around, the splendor does not
last long, and even an adult's hand frequently punctures the screen in
trying to open the door. Holes are left unrepaired for the remainder of
the year.

The eating corner between kitchen and rear room is the place where 342
most families gather in the evening, especially during the winter. An 364
informal caller may join them there. If it is cold, a brazier is put in 354
the center, filled with pieces of charcoal on top of old ashes to provide
heat for those sitting around it. These braziers vary in type: the poorest
families use the bottom of an oil drum filled with ashes; others use
pottery jars or small wooden boxes lined with metal.

Crockery used in most houses is of a simple type. If breakage oc- 415
curs, as it often does, a cup or bowl can be replaced for a few yen at the
grocery store. Well-to-do families may have an extra set of teacups,
which are used for guests. Several families also own lacquer ware, but
it is not in daily use. Like cups and bowls, chopsticks are simple and [412]
inexpensive. They last a long time and are seldom lost. Children do

415 not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap. Children do

354 The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyuan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

356 As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

312 Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

351 The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

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Chapter 2

Daily Routine

805 There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, 512 post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

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- 313 which they use interchangeably. After sufficient trees have been cut and
[412] cleared of branches, a large bundle of firewood is carried to the vil-
lage. Most forest workers make four or five trips a day into the hills—
two or three during the hot summer season. As the afternoon ends, they
sit down along the road in the village or nearby to prepare firewood
474 bundles. Pieces of wood are inserted through a bamboo loop of stand-
313 ard size, prescribed by the cooperative store, until a tight, uniform
bundle is obtained. The last piece has to be driven into the bundle
by force. All over the village one can hear the knocking of wood pieces
[592] which marks the end of a forest worker's daily labor. Each household
works independently and sells firewood to the cooperative. A store
[436] clerk travels around the village in late afternoon, checks all bundles,
and issues credit slips to each household; these can be changed into
money at the store. The following morning the truck, owned by the
[438] cooperative, carries the firewood to Naha or Itoman where it is sold to
a dealer who redistributes it to individual consumers or public bath-
houses. The northern part of the island has always supplied firewood
to the population of southern Okinawa to be used for kitchen hearths
and bath stoves. In recent years kerosene kitchen stoves have become so
• [354] popular that the depletion of wood resources tends to coincide with
decreasing demand.

TRADES AND PROFESSIONS

- 463 Other ways of making a living exist. A few artisans in Taira derive
part of their income from wage labor. A number of Taira men earn
their living by carpentering, although they do most of their work in
the south. They return occasionally when their services are needed for
local house building. When working on local construction, they are
[465] paid in money, free lodging, and meals. There are also a few part-time
resident carpenters who, whenever they are not employed in house
building or repairs, spend their time farming and cutting wood. New
[342] buildings are usually put up between the beginning of the second rice
crop and the New Year.
- 463 Several persons are salaried township or village officials. They are
466 paid monthly and work a 44-hour week, not counting many extra meet-
ings and duties connected with their work. All office workers however
[647] have fields, either their own or those of their parents, where they spend
Sundays helping in agricultural pursuits. During rice planting season,
they are given special time off to attend to their fields.
- Also among the salaried workers are store employees, a full-time

CHAPTER V: FAMILY LIFE

W. P. Suttles

1. Kinship Organization

- 342 The Household and the Family Okinawan homes, both in the country and in the towns, show a surprising uniformity in structure, in floor plan, and even in orientation. This uniformity reflects the stability of society and at the same time reinforces it. The home of the Okinawan farmer usually faces south; indeed the older villages as a whole were established on southward-facing slopes.

The house consists of two main rooms separated by sliding doors, a long and narrow back room behind the two front rooms, and a kitchen to one side, usually the west. The measurements are usually in multiples of three feet (the Japanese foot being almost identical with the English foot); the two main rooms are usually the same size, 9 by 9 or 12 by 12 feet, and the others are somewhat smaller. The roofs of most houses are thatched with "kaya", but people who can afford it have wholly or partly tiled roofs. The roof of the kitchen may have a separate peak and ridgepole from that of the main part of the house. Usually the roof of the main part of the house extends beyond the front rooms so that there is a narrow veranda across the front and halfway around the side opposite the kitchen. The house usually has no windows. The kitchen has an outside door and the front rooms have sliding doors all the way around under the veranda; these are usually open except at night or during bad weather.

The main part of the house has a floor of boards but the kitchen often has only an earth floor or else consists of two sections, one floored and one not. The kitchen is thus usually lower than the main part of the house and is referred to as "below" while the main part is "above", but this also implies a difference in status. The room farthest from the kitchen is called the "first room" and the middle room is the "second room". The back room may be a single long room or may be divided into two. At the back of the kitchen is the oven, usually made of earth or bricks with two or three holes for pots and pans to fit into. At the back of the second room, if the house is a "main house"---that of an eldest son, is the tootoomee (J. 'butsudan'), a cabinet for the ancestral tablets. At the back of the first room there is often an alcove containing a scroll and perhaps a family treasure; this is the u-tuku (J. 'tokonoma').

- 352 In the homes of more prosperous families the floors of the front rooms are permanently covered with "tatami", the thick mats used by the Japanese, but in most homes the only mats are the thinner mushiru, which are spread out only when needed. Furniture is simple; the mushiru are the equivalent of chairs and beds; a low table may be brought out to put food upon at meal-time and a pot of burning charcoal may be brought out in cold weather for a little heat. Usually one sees only a basket of teacups and a tobacco-box. On formal occasions the men sit in the first room and the women in the second, but usually the partition is removed and the family simply lives in the whole space.

843 be drawn into the tomb. Some say the prospective father should also avoid these situations. Another set of observances has an easy delivery as its aim. The woman is urged to work hard and not to overeat so that the unborn child may not become too large. During the fifth month a "belly band" is wrapped tightly about her for the same purpose, especially to keep the head small.

A woman neither hides her pregnancy nor displays it unnecessarily--- if she is married and it is her husband's child. If this is not the case she may attempt to hide the fact. On the other hand if she is bearing what may be her husband's first son, she may be very pleased at the prospect, but she does not go out of her way to show it.

843 No clear statement was given to the effect that the "soul" enters the
774 body of the unborn child at a particular time, but statements are made about dangers to the shii of the child. One informant suggested that this soul-like
[847] entity enters the body of the mother during the third month and that for this reason a moxibustionist had refused to abort a woman after her third month had passed.

847 Abortion Abortions have always been and continue to be performed on Okinawa. The most frequent reason is said to be the desire not to bear an illegitimate child. An old-fashioned home method is to brew camphor-wood leaves and drink the brew or to burn the leaves and breathe the smoke. Experts in cauterization are also believed to be able to cause an abortion by burning moxa on the proper areas of the body. But at the present time women are said to be aborted more frequently by midwives. The practice does not appear to be regarded as illegal.

844 Birth A woman tries to work up until the time of childbirth. If she has had several children already she knows when labor starts, how long it is likely to last, and may go out to the fields confident that she can return in time. Delivery is in the kucha, the back room of the house. Women of the family are present and men are not forbidden, though children are sent out. Often a woman's husband grasps her during delivery. Formerly she squatted on the floor holding a rope suspended from a house-beam above her. At present she is usually made to lie down. The labor is spoken of as "pain" but the woman must not cry out; she may only grunt when putting her strength into the ejection of the baby. If she were to cry out because of the pain she would later feel very ashamed---"because it is something that happens to every woman; people would talk about her."

853 Formerly the newly-born child was neither bathed nor dressed but simply wrapped in an old kimono; now it is bathed in boiled water and dressed. The infant is permitted to nurse from about the fourth day on, after there is milk in the mother's breasts. Before this it may be given a little sugar in water and possibly allowed to suck a little colostrum about the second day after birth.

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[354] Formerly the mother was kept in the kucha for about a week in front of a fire burning on the jiiru, an open hearth in country homes, a kind of brazier in the city.

brazier in the city. She was kept warm continuously, even in hot weather, so that, it is said, women often broke out in skin eruptions from the heat. At present younger women are not following this practice and many regard it as a foolish custom. The absence of jiiru in post-war houses may be a factor in the decline of the custom. [354] • 178 846

Post-natal Observances During the first year of life the child is the center of several ceremonies. They are in brief: 852

1) Mbagii suuji, "Red rice ceremony". Held on the day of birth. Relatives, friends, and neighbors come. Rice dyed red and a soup of taro stems (a symbol of many children) are offered to the ancestral tablets and served to the guests. The afterbirth is buried behind the house while the children are made to laugh so that the baby will have a good disposition. [844]

2) Naa'jiki, "Naming". Held during the first week. Practices vary. In one variety the baby's grandmother releases a crab and a grasshopper and shoots an arrow at a winnowing tray; in another she divines with rice grains to see if the name she has selected is proper. This rite was formerly held to give the baby its native Okinawan name. [553] [787]

3) Mansang, "Full birth". Held on the 7th or 30th day after the birth to celebrate the full term. A feast is served to relative, friends, and neighbors.

4) Naa'njii, "First going out". Held for a boy on the first day of the ten-day cycle, designated as kanii, on the second kanii day for a girl. The baby's grandmother makes it pray to the ancestral tablets and to the oven god, then marks its forehead with soot and takes it out, formerly to pray to the god of the pigsty-privy. [769] [782]

5) Hachi-atchii, "First walking". Held whenever the mother is first able to go to visit her parents and siblings. She takes gifts of food to them and in return they give money to the baby.

6) Tania, "Birthday". Held on the first anniversary of the birth. A feast is prepared and many relatives and friends come bringing gifts of money. The child's future career is divined by placing a number of objects in front of it---money, a book, an abacus, food, etc. If the child chooses the money he will be rich; if the book, a scholar; if the food, a glutton; and so forth. The odds are usually weighted in favor of a desirable future. [527] [787]

There seems to be some variation in all of these practices. Several may be obsolescent because some of the elements entering into them are no longer in use, the pigsty-privy and the native names, for example. [178]

Infanticide New-born babies may be done away with if they are not wanted, but this is probably not at all common under ordinary circumstances. One example was recorded: An old woman who died recently lay for about a week on her death bed unable to talk. Her children gathered about her, wondering if some sin ('tsumi') were not in need of atonement ('tsugunai'). 847 783